



File Code: 1950-1

Date: July 29, 2011

I am writing to inform you that the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Wagner Resource Management project is available for public comment. A copy of the assessment is being sent to those who responded to the initial scoping or to agencies or members of the public that need to receive this notice. You may also view the EA on the Chippewa NF website. I am writing now, to invite your comments.

Several of you are receiving the EA on a CD rather than as a hard copy. This saves significantly on printing and mailing costs. If you need to receive the EA hard copy, please call our office at (218)835-4291 and we will mail one to you.

The EA analyzes in detail the Proposed Action (Alternative C), one other action alternative (Alternative D), and the No Action Alternative (Alternative A). These alternatives are different than the alternative that you saw earlier in the Scoping Letter. Alternative B was sent out for comments during the scoping period, and was dropped from analysis due to comments received during that period. So if you made comments during the 30-day scoping period, you will want to review the new alternatives to see where changes have occurred. Further details regarding the proposed activities by alternative can be found in chapter 2 of the EA, including the changes from the old alternative that is discussed in Section 2.1.5.

I (Greg Morris, District Ranger) am the Responsible Official for this project. My preferred alternative at this time is Alternative C (the Proposed Action) as described in the EA. Each alternative has advantages and disadvantages, so I need your input during this 30-day comment period to determine which one would be best for the Forest and would best meet the Purpose and Need for the project.

Consultation has been completed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Cultural resource surveys have been conducted on treated stands. Reviews with the State Historic Preservation Office and the Tribal Historic Preservation Office have been initiated.

This project is subject to 36 CFR 215 Notice, Comment, and Appeal Procedures dated June 4, 2003 and the final decision will be appealable under these regulations. In order to retain your administrative appeal rights, you must provide written, oral, or electronic comments **during this 30-day comment period**. If you wish to reference scientific literature in your comments, I request that you send a copy of the reference you have cited and include a rationale as to how you feel it is pertinent to the specific project at hand. This will allow me to fully evaluate your comments. If I do not receive a copy of the literature I may not be able to utilize it in making a decision. Comments may be submitted in writing, orally, or through electronic means.



Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to appeal must provide the following:

- (i) Name and address
- (ii) Title of the proposed action
- (iii) Specific comments on the proposed action, along with supporting reasons that I should consider in reaching a decision.
- (iv) Signature or other verification of identity upon request.

For appeal eligibility, each individual or representative from each organization submitting comments must either sign the comments or verify identity upon request.

The comment period will start on the day following publication of the legal notice in the newspaper of record (*The American* in Blackduck) and ends 30 days following that date. When the comment period would end on a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday; comments will be accepted until the end of the next Federal working day. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection.

Written comments must be postmarked by the Postal Service, faxed, or otherwise submitted by 11:59 pm on 30th calendar day following publication of the legal notice. Hand delivered comments must be time and date imprinted at the correct Responsible Official's office by the close of business on the 30th calendar day following publication of legal notice. Send written comments to;

District Ranger, Greg Morris
Wagner Resource Management EA
Blackduck Ranger District
417 Forestry Drive
Blackduck, MN 56630

Telephone (218) 835-4291

FAX: (218)835-3132

[Business Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday]

Oral comments must be provided at the Responsible Official's office during normal business hours via telephone or in person, or if during non-business hours, must be at an official agency function (such as a public meeting), which is designed to elicit public comment.

Electronic comments may be submitted to "comments-eastern-chippewa-blackduck@fs.fed.us". The subject line must contain the name of the project for which you are submitting comments. Acceptable formats are PDF, MS Word, or RTF. For electronically mailed comments, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgement from the agency as a confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgement of the receipt of comments, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means.

An electronic version of the EA is available for viewing and downloading on the Chippewa NF website at "<http://fs.usda.gov/chippewa>", then choose the "Land and Resource Management" item and under it choose "Projects". Detailed records of the environmental analysis are available for public review at the Blackduck Ranger District Office. To request a paper copy (or a CD copy) of the EA or for additional information contact; Cory Mlodik, Linda Burke, or Greg Morris by phone at (218)835-4291; in person or by mail at 417 Forestry Drive, Blackduck, MN 56630; or by emailing all three at corymlodik@fs.fed.us and lburke@fs.fed.us and gmorris@fs.fed.us.

A Decision Notice will be mailed to those who have commented during this 30 day public involvement process for this project, and to those who request the Decision Notice during this time. We appreciate your interest in the Chippewa National Forest.

Sincerely,

/s/ Gregory W. Morris
GREGORY W. MORRIS
Blackduck District Ranger

Enclosure (1 EA – paper or CD)